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Matters relating to the least developed countries

Report on the twenty-first meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

This document reports on the twenty-first meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), held in Thimphu, Bhutan, from 9 to 13 March 2012, and provides a two-year rolling work programme for 2012–2013 and an update on the efforts of the LEG to implement its work. The report includes a summary of the status of preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). In addition, it provides information on the planning process for the upcoming LEG regional training workshops, as well as a summary of the discussions on the technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process. The report provides details of the discussions with the Global Environment Facility and its agencies on the latest experiences, emerging issues and gaps in developing NAPA projects, and the discussions on further specifications for the elements of the least developed countries work programme other than the NAPA. Issues discussed during a meeting between the LEG and Bhutan's NAPA team are also presented.

* This document was submitted after the due date as a result of the timing of the meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group.

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I. Mandate

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by decision 29/CP.7, established the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) to advise on the preparation and implementation strategy for national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). Over the years, the mandate of the LEG has progressively been expanded and under its current term (2011–2015) the LEG mandate includes providing support to least developed countries (LDCs) on the NAPAs, the LDC work programme and the national adaptation plan (NAP) process.
2. In response to decision 6/CP.16, the LEG developed a work programme for 2011–2012¹ at its nineteenth meeting, which was considered by the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) at its thirty-fourth session. The SBI endorsed the work programme of the LEG for 2011–2012 and requested the LEG to report on its work programme to the SBI at each of its sessions,² in accordance with decision 6/CP.16.

II. Summary of the twenty-first meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

A. Proceedings

3. The twenty-first meeting of the LEG was held in Thimphu, Bhutan, from 9 to 13 March 2012.
4. The COP, by decision 8/CP.13, mandated the LEG to invite, when deemed necessary, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its agencies to its meetings. In addition, decision 6/CP.16 requested the LEG to engage a wide range of organizations to support the implementation of its work programme. Consequently, the GEF and four of its agencies: the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) took part in the meeting. The LEG extended the invitation to experts from the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York, the Regional Climate Change Programme (RCCP) of Southern Africa and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).
5. The meeting was opened by Dr. Ugyen Tshewang, the Secretary of the National Environment Commission, on behalf of the Government of Bhutan. He highlighted the value of the work of the LEG to countries like Bhutan where climate change has become a real threat to the population and to the State's development efforts. He mentioned that Bhutan is at an advanced stage in the implementation of its first NAPA project on glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and that it has also updated its NAPA to take into consideration new climate vulnerabilities, which have become apparent in recent years.
6. During this meeting, the LEG focused its work on issues related to the implementation of NAPAs and the LDC work programme, the strategy for conducting the regional training workshops for 2012–2013, the approach for the development of technical guidelines for the NAP process, and on outreach activities and various case studies to enrich the work of the LEG. The LEG also developed its work programme for 2012–2013.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2011/4, annex I. A detailed version of the work programme, including specific objectives, expected outcomes and a timeline, is available on the UNFCCC website at <<http://unfccc.int/5977>>.

² FCCC/SBI/2011/7, paragraph 88.

B. Status of preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

1. Status of preparation of national adaptation programmes of action

7. As at 13 March 2012, of the 48 LDCs that had received funding for the preparation of NAPAs, 47 had submitted NAPAs to the secretariat. The latest NAPA, from Angola, was submitted in December 2011. Myanmar, the remaining country, is making good progress towards the completion of its NAPA. Two LDCs have not requested funding for the preparation of their NAPAs, namely Equatorial Guinea and Somalia.

2. Status of implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

8. At the meeting, the GEF communicated information on the NAPA projects under its consideration to the LEG. As at 13 March 2012, 43 countries had officially submitted one or more NAPA projects to the GEF in the form of a project identification form (PIF). In total, 58 PIFs have been approved and 33 projects have received endorsement by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the GEF to start project implementation on the ground. Nine projects were endorsed by the CEO during 2011.

9. The GEF indicated that the average time taken between the completion of the NAPA and the approval of the first project by the GEF Council is one year and seven months. The shortest recorded time for this period was 75 days. Twelve countries took less than a year to prepare PIFs that received GEF Council approval.

10. To date, the following GEF agencies are supporting the implementation of NAPA projects financed by the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF): the African Development Bank (supporting the implementation of three NAPA projects), FAO (three), International Fund for Agricultural Development (five), UNEP (seven), UNDP (33), UNDP and UNEP jointly (two), and the World Bank (six, including a programmatic approach).

11. As at 9 March 2012, 25 donors had pledged USD 537.02 million to the LDCF and the GEF announced that the new ceiling for each LDC for implementing NAPA projects had been set at USD 15 million.

C. Consideration of the implementation of national adaptation programmes of action

1. Accessing project processing information

12. The COP, by decision 5/CP.16, requested the SBI to review, at its thirty-seventh session, the experiences of the LDCs with the implementation of the LDC work programme, including the updating and implementation of NAPAs, and in accessing funds from the LDCF, on the basis of submissions received from Parties and relevant organizations and a synthesis report prepared by the secretariat. In addition, the COP, by decision 9/CP.17, requested the LDCs to provide details on project processing information to the LEG for it to compile and analyse, with a view to providing the results of the analysis to the COP, for its consideration at its eighteenth session.

13. Consequently, during the meeting, the LEG discussed the possible approaches for collecting project processing information from LDC Parties. It was concluded that the project processing information should include, inter alia, all versions and drafts of the project documents submitted to the LDCF, the final project documents (PIFs and detailed full project documents (FPD)) approved by the GEF, and when necessary, the review sheets of the project documents sent by the GEF to the countries and the agencies. It was also agreed that this information will be collected by the LEG through liaison with all the

national focal points, by e-mail, and/or through interviews conducted during the thirty-sixth sessions of the subsidiary bodies. LDC Parties will be requested to send all relevant information to the LEG by the end of August 2012.

2. Monitoring and evaluation of the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action and the implementation of the least developed countries work programme

14. The LEG initiated discussions on an approach for monitoring the effectiveness of adaptation efforts in LDCs that are implemented as part of the NAPA process and/or the LDC work programme. The LEG noted the challenging nature of this task given that most NAPA projects have recently begun implementation, and hence do not yet have data or results to demonstrate their effectiveness on the ground. The LEG, however, further noted that other organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Resources Institute, have developed approaches to monitor and evaluate adaptation action and projects. The LEG agreed to do an inventory of such relevant existing work and to develop an approach paper for discussion at its next meeting.

D. Planning for the regional training workshops for 2012–2013

15. The LEG discussed the terms of reference of the regional training workshops planned for 2012–2013, an outline of the training materials to be used and the potential partners to be involved. The LEG agreed that the workshops will need to build on the previous LEG training workshops and address issues that have emerged since these workshops were held. They need to take into account new templates and requirements for developing projects under the LDCF, new approaches such as the programmatic approach, and the emerging opportunities such as combining multiple GEF funds for implementing NAPAs, among other issues. Furthermore, drawing upon the issues identified in the work programme of the LEG for 2011–2012,³ and upon the additional guidance provided by the SBI at its thirty-fifth session,⁴ the LEG agreed on the following broad objectives for the workshops:

- (a) To enhance the capacity of LDCs to implement NAPAs successfully;
- (b) To enhance the capacity of LDCs to undertake processes for medium- and long-term adaptation, building upon NAPAs;
- (c) To promote exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned among the LDCs;
- (d) To promote gender and other considerations regarding vulnerable communities in the design and implementation of adaptation projects.

16. The LEG also defined a set of outcomes, which primarily aim at enhancing the capabilities of LDC practitioners to develop projects for implementing NAPAs, and increasing their awareness and/or knowledge of relevant project development concepts, gender aspects, considerations for integrating adaptation into development, and their knowledge of experiences, best practices and lessons learned by others in the same region.

17. To support the workshops, the LEG developed an outline of the training materials to be used at the workshops. Furthermore, the LEG agreed to consider providing tailored training packages to the workshop trainees, to enable them to conduct subsequent training at their national levels where feasible. The training materials will include the following

³ FCCC/SBI/2011/4, annex I.

⁴ FCCC/SBI/2011/17, paragraph 70.

modules that can be used in a flexible manner, in accordance with the needs of each regional workshop:

- (a) National development processes: how adaptation can be integrated into development processes, and how to link the two concepts;
- (b) Assessment of the NAPA: the status of implementation, quality and need for revision and update;
- (c) Emerging trends and approaches to implementation: programmatic approaches, considerations of factors of vulnerability, etc.;
- (d) Overview of the GEF/LDCF project cycle including updates on new requirements and enhancements;
- (e) Accessing funds under the Adaptation Fund: a compilation of existing training materials;
- (f) Consideration of scale: moving from urgent and immediate needs to medium- and long-term adaptation including through needs assessments, scaling up, planning approaches and innovative investments;
- (g) Exploring synergies with other programmes at the regional and subregional levels (e.g. the Great Green Wall Initiative of the Sahara and the Sahel,⁵ the Mekong River Commission Climate Change and Adaptation Initiative,⁶ and the Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change Project⁷);
- (h) Tracking progress: reporting, monitoring and review;
- (i) Methodology for capturing and sharing best practices and lessons learned.

18. The training will target LDC practitioners that deal with NAPAs and/or other adaptation-related activities at the national level, including those from relevant overarching national planning mechanisms. The design of the workshops will take into consideration regional and language aspects, including sector-specific issues of interest by each region and the overall progress in implementing NAPAs and/or addressing adaptation. The LEG will engage the GEF and its agencies in the design and implementation of the workshops, and will solicit collaboration from regional centres and programmes, organizations that are working on regional programmes, and regional economic commissions. Closer collaboration will also be instigated with the various bodies under the Convention including the Adaptation Committee, the Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention (CGE) and the Technology Executive Committee.

19. The LEG intends to finalize the training materials for the workshops by the end of June 2012 and to conduct the first training workshop in the second half of 2012. The rest of the regional workshops will be conducted during 2013. The LEG estimates that the overall cost of conducting the workshops including the design and preparation of training materials will be approximately USD 800,000.

⁵ See <<http://www.thegef.org>>.

⁶ See <<http://www.mrcmekong.org/about-the-mrc/programmes/climate-change-and-adaptation-initiative>>.

⁷ See <<http://www.sprep.org/pacc-home>>.

E. Conducting in-depth case studies in least developed countries

20. At its nineteenth meeting, the LEG had identified the execution of case studies on the areas of work of the LEG as one of the tools to carry out its activities and enhance its provision of support. Two case studies were presented at the twentieth meeting of the LEG. The first case study was on Malawi and the second was on the Lao People's Democratic Republic.⁸ The LEG intends to continue conducting case studies in other LDCs and in even greater detail, with the following objectives:

- (a) To gather detailed information from LDCs on their experiences, best practices and lessons learned in preparing and implementing their NAPAs and the other elements of the LDC work programme;
- (b) To learn, as well as introduce, new and innovative concepts such as programmatic/sector-wide approaches, the integration of gender considerations and considerations of vulnerability, the issue of scale in adaptation planning, etc.;
- (c) To work closely with LDCs to generate, as well as to gain, a better understanding of the needs and opportunities for transitioning from the NAPAs towards medium- and long-term adaptation;
- (d) To identify how countries have started to evolve from project-based adaptation planning to national adaptation plans/strategies;
- (e) To identify and build upon opportunities for integrating adaptation into national development planning;
- (f) To promote regional and international synergies including the identification of best practices in terms of regional engagement;
- (g) To cover any other area that is supported by the LEG.

21. The case studies will entail undertaking, including supporting, the following activities in targeted LDCs:

- (a) Assembling experiences, best practices and lessons learned in preparing and implementing NAPAs and the LDC work programme;
- (b) Identifying and documenting innovative approaches to implement projects at the national, regional and sectoral levels;
- (c) Assembling the best available data and information on biophysical and social variables that are useful in characterizing the baseline situation, and that provide a quantification of key bases for the development of activities;
- (d) Reviewing climate and socio-economic scenarios for the country and/or the region;
- (e) Assessing and documenting relevant national policy processes and frameworks, plans, programmes, including models and strategies for socio-economic growth and development;
- (f) Performing participatory rapid integrated vulnerability and adaptation assessments and identifying adaptation activities;
- (g) Undertaking comprehensive analysis and documentation of the data and information related to the design and implementation of medium- and long-term adaptation activities;

⁸ FCCC/SBI/2011/11, paragraphs 43–45.

(h) Compiling and analyzing considerations for the development of national strategies and plans for adaptation.

F. Provision of technical guidance and support to the national adaptation plan process

1. Technical guidelines for the national adaptation plan process

22. The COP, by decision 5/CP.17, adopted the initial guidelines for the formulation of NAPs by LDC Parties.⁹ It requested the LEG to prepare technical guidelines for the NAP process based on the initial guidelines.

23. The LEG discussed the approach for developing the technical guidelines for the NAP process, including a timeline. It was agreed that the technical guidelines needed to be flexible and to follow a 'menu' approach where country teams would choose components of interest and create their own frameworks or sets of steps that would constitute their NAP process. It was also agreed that certain elements of the 'menu' would be essential in laying the groundwork for the NAP process in certain countries. It was felt that the technical guidelines could also encourage the enhancement of capacity in LDCs to carry out the work on their own. This would require a more deliberate delivery and a set of entry points, rather than applying a fully packaged suite of fixed steps, as had been presented in past guidelines.

24. It was further agreed that a core set of technical guidelines could be developed for common types of assessments by climate hazard type (floods, droughts, storms, etc.), sector (agriculture and food security, water, health, coastal systems, etc.), as well as level (community, district/region, national, shared basin, etc.), and that these could be adapted from existing material, where possible..

25. The LEG also agreed that the outputs of the NAP process in each country could include, inter alia, progress reports, a plan or planning document that will be published to communicate the priority adaptation needs, policies, programmes and activities for a given national planning period. The NAP process was defined to be broader than just the production of a static national adaptation plan document, and will include all necessary components of an adaptation approach (such as gap analysis, capacity-building, outreach plans, stakeholder engagement, and plans for developing concrete policies, programmes and projects).

26. The discussions highlighted the need to have a sound scientific and technical review of the draft guidelines, through the mandated review, by means of a technical review meeting and/or an external peer-review process. Such a process would help to ensure that the guidelines reflect the best available scientific knowledge and expertise with regard to national adaptation planning. The LEG estimated that the review process could be undertaken with the participation of some of the LEG members, some members of the CGE, the Adaptation Committee, academics, and other relevant experts and representatives of agencies and organizations.

27. In addition, the LEG set the following timeline for completion of the guidelines:

- (a) End of April 2012: first order draft;
- (b) End of May 2012: second order draft;
- (c) Beginning of August 2012: scientific and technical review of the advanced draft by a subset of the LEG and external reviewers;

⁹ Decision 5/CP.17, annex.

(d) End of October 2012: final version of the guidelines ready for publication and translation.

2. Examples of ongoing national adaptation planning processes from developed countries

28. The national adaptation planning process being undertaken by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was discussed by the LEG, to highlight certain lessons that can be considered by LDCs as they embark on their NAP processes. The discussion also served to highlight the differences between national adaptation planning in developed countries to that in LDCs, particularly in terms of resources, capacity and support.

29. The LEG considered the case study interesting, and acknowledged that the way risks were prioritized according to magnitude, urgency and confidence in data during the vulnerability and risk assessment could be a good model to replicate for medium- and long-term planning in LDCs. The LEG also acknowledged that basing the national plan on a legally binding framework or policy, as was the case in the United Kingdom, could assist in both mainstreaming adaptation and creating a sense of ownership by different government departments/ministries.

30. The LEG noted that strong institutional capacities were a relevant component in the United Kingdom example, and that this was something that LDCs still need to build. In addition, in contrast to the United Kingdom, LDCs would need to include one additional step: that of resource mobilization, particularly in terms of financial resources.

G. Implementation of the least developed countries work programme

1. Provision of further specification on each of the elements of the least developed countries work programme other than the national adaptation programmes of action

31. The LEG was requested by the COP, by decision 9/CP.17, to provide further specifications on each of the elements of the LDC work programme other than the NAPAs, in consultation with the GEF, with a view to informing the COP of guidance to be provided to the GEF on the implementation of those elements. The LDC work programme as established under decision 5/CP.7 contains the following elements:

(a) Strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing, national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol in LDCs;

(b) Providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiation skills and language, where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from the least developed countries to participate effectively in the climate change process;

(c) Supporting the preparation of NAPAs;

(d) Promotion of public awareness programmes to ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues;

(e) Development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7);

(f) Strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate weather and climate information to support implementation of NAPAs.

32. The LEG prepared further specifications on each of the elements of the LDC work programme other than the NAPA process. At the meeting, the LEG and the GEF discussed the specifications including possible ways in which they could be addressed, with a view to consolidating information that would inform the COP on the guidance to be provided to the GEF.

33. On strengthening existing and, where needed, establishing national climate change secretariats and/or focal points to enable the effective implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, in the LDC Parties, it was noted that many LDCs established a national secretariat to oversee the national communication process as well as to manage the NAPA preparation process. In fact, the completion of their initial national communications was used as the basis for establishing the climate change secretariats. These secretariats are, however, at different stages of full functionality. Given the increasing number of climate change activities, the need is mainly for a permanent or at least a long-term financial support for a secretariat or unit that handles climate change matters on a full-time basis. In some cases, this could be combined with oversight of other conventions. The national climate change secretariats usually oversee the following functions:

(a) Provision of support for the development of a regulatory framework that would underpin a country's response to the Convention;

(b) Regular support for addressing basic human, institutional and resource needs to coordinate national climate change programmes;

(c) Communication of incoming climate change information and requests for input and programmes with relevant stakeholders at the national level.

34. As a way forward, it was agreed that there is a need to provide adequate support to countries to enable them to strengthen their climate change secretariats. The GEF could contribute to such efforts by developing, in collaboration with its agencies, a global programme with a strong component on training aimed at strengthening the capacity of existing climate change secretariats with regard to the implementation of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol. While developing such a global programme, the GEF should seek good practices that could be replicated by looking at models of support of secretariats from other multilateral environmental agreements and conventions including the Montreal Protocol.

35. On providing training, on an ongoing basis, in negotiating skills and language, and where needed, to develop the capacity of negotiators from LDCs to participate effectively in the climate change process, it was noted that there are past and ongoing initiatives that provide training sessions and capacity-building for developing countries including LDCs. It was also noted that there are LDCs whose needs have not been met, and which would like to receive further training in negotiation skills and language. It was further noted that the specifications on issues to be addressed under this element could include the following:

(a) Means to equip climate change negotiators with up-to-date information on major issues under discussion in the intergovernmental process;

(b) Support to initiatives that aim to improve the language skills of climate change negotiators including fellowship programmes and online language courses.

36. It was then concluded that those countries that have remaining needs with respect to negotiating skills and language could, with the assistance of the GEF and its agencies, prioritize and communicate such needs for expedited support including through a dedicated support programme.

37. On the promotion of public awareness programmes to ensure the dissemination of information on climate change issues, it was noted that such public awareness programmes

on climate change in LDCs, building on the lessons learned from the work based on Article 6 of the Convention, could include the following specifications:

(a) Strengthening of existing channels for promoting awareness of climate change issues;

(b) Developing and implementing awareness programmes: either education programmes (both formal and informal education) or training programmes for groups with a key role in climate change education and communication (e.g. teachers and journalists);

(c) Facilitating public access to information on climate change through the means of websites, flyers, newsletters, etc., with translation into local languages.

38. To address these, it was noted that the greatest limitation is financial resources, particularly to expand outreach activities from the location of the projects (e.g. NAPAs) to other regions of the country. A possible option was seen as sourcing contributions from each NAPA/adaptation project towards a national pool to support nationwide activities on outreach.

39. On the development and transfer of technology, particularly adaptation technology (in accordance with decision 4/CP.7), the following specifications that would be relevant for the provision of support to LDCs were identified:

(a) Conducting technology needs assessments for adaptation at the national, local and community levels;

(b) Strengthening of a technology enabling environment including national institutions for technology innovations and research and technology development;

(c) Capacity-building, including:

(i) The provision of opportunities for training in the use of environmentally sound technologies through demonstration projects;

(ii) The enhancement of skills in the adoption, adaptation, installation, operation and maintenance of specific environmentally sound technologies;

(iii) Training in project development and the management and operation of climate technologies;

(iv) The improvement of knowledge on energy efficiency and the utilization of renewable energy technologies;

(d) Strengthening or establishing mechanisms for technology transfer in key sectors including water resources (irrigation, water management), agriculture and food security (integrated soil fertility management, crop and livestock breeding, seed production and storage) and coastal zones (the construction of dykes, afforestation and reforestation of coastal areas).

40. In order to address the above-mentioned issues, support under the LDCF could facilitate initiatives that would encourage the sharing of information, experiences, best practices and know-how on the specifications, especially at the regional level. Stand-alone projects of a medium- or full-sized nature could be an ideal format for LDCs to access funding for implementing this element of the LDC work programme.

41. On strengthening the capacity of meteorological and hydrological services to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate weather and climate information to support implementation of NAPAs, it was underscored that data collection is fundamental in building an information and knowledge base to support the analysis and decision-making process for adaptation. It was noted that little progress is reported by LDCs in enhancing

their capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate relevant information. It was also noted that the specifications of this element could include the following:

- (a) Strengthening the capacity for making observations which could entail modernization, strengthening and expansion of observational networks and equipment, including remote sensing, and the strengthening of regional instrumentation and calibration centres;
- (b) Strengthening telecommunication systems for the transmission of weather and climate data from the observing platforms to the analysis and processing centres;
- (c) Capacity-building for forecasting, post-processing and service production systems;
- (d) Establishing and/or upgrading data management systems;
- (e) Strengthening the efficient communication of climate information from the processing centres to various end users.

42. In order to address this element, it was suggested that the following options could be explored:

- (a) LDCF projects are to set aside a specific percentage of their budget towards strengthening national data collection efforts, beyond the specific area of the project. If this were implemented, the density of monitoring stations could increase to a useful level, and ongoing support could be sought through local sources or through contributions from new projects;
- (b) LDCs are to package their support needs and identified activities, in particular with regard to facilitating access to climate change data, into a full-sized project to be submitted for funding under the LDCF.

43. Furthermore, it was noted that the different components of the LDC work programme hold different levels of priority for different countries, and the decision on which activities to implement should be made by the country. The LEG also noted that other enabling activities such as the preparation of national communications, technology needs assessments and other specific activities could have addressed some of the needs under the remaining elements of the work programme.

44. Given the long-standing mandates to the GEF to provide funding for these elements of the LDC work programme, the following options were proposed to meet country-driven needs:

- (a) Enabling activities that could be part of a global programme (projects by one or more GEF agencies) for all LDCs with support provided to each country based on their prioritization of the elements of the LDC work programme;
- (b) Medium- or full-sized projects based on the LDCF resources available to each LDC using existing modalities for implementing NAPA priorities;
- (c) Whenever it is possible and practical, the GEF could also facilitate direct access by LDCs for the implementation of the other elements of the LDC work programme other than the NAPA.

45. In cases where activities that are related to certain elements of the LDC work programme have been partially supported, including through bilateral support, there is still an opportunity for the GEF to contribute to ongoing efforts as a means of catalysing continuous and predictable support from the international community.

2. Strengthening gender and other considerations regarding vulnerable communities within least developed countries

46. As preliminary outputs of its discussion on this matter, the LEG further identified ways to strengthen gender and other considerations regarding vulnerable communities in adaptation plans and strategies. The group suggested that gender considerations and other considerations of vulnerability could be mainstreamed into policy and planning processes on a country-by-country basis, given that different LDCs have different vulnerabilities, and gender-related vulnerabilities are more relevant for some than others.

47. As a way forward on this matter, the LEG agreed to finalize its paper on gender considerations and considerations regarding vulnerable communities in the implementation of the LDC work programme. The paper will be incorporated into the training materials for the regional training workshops to be conducted in 2012–2013, and will also be used to provide technical guidance and support under the NAP process.

H. Planning for enhanced outreach initiatives and dissemination of products of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

1. Enhancement of the least developed countries web portal

48. In line with objective six of its work programme for 2011–2015, the LEG discussed its plan to enhance the LDC portal. The LEG also took note of decision 5/CP.17, paragraphs 36 and 38, on the NAP process, by which the COP requested the secretariat to do the following:

(a) Consistent with Article 8 of the Convention, collect, compile and synthesize the information needed by the SBI to monitor and evaluate the progress made on the NAP process;

(b) Utilize and enhance existing databases, to include information on support and other activities under the NAP process, as appropriate.

49. As the LDC portal continues to serve as the main information hub for LDCs on NAPAs and the LDC work programme, its enhancement will also provide a gateway to information and support for the NAP process through a dynamic and interactive interface.

50. The enhanced LDC portal will include the following components:

(a) Enhanced web pages on information about the work of the LEG;

(b) A NAPA information system, which will feature information on resources which support NAPA preparation and an interactive NAPA implementation project database;

(c) A global NAP information system to be designed as a global one-stop information hub about the NAP process in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders. Such an approach will help to prevent the development of numerous websites duplicating work and delivering information that is not always up-to-date. The LEG believes that the design of the NAP information system should encourage the coordination and harmonization of efforts to ensure an efficient and accurate delivery of information and support to LDCs and others preparing and implementing the NAPs. The global information system will also include an accompanying country portal, which will focus on the national level, to effectively coordinate NAP related activities and monitor progress;

(d) An enhanced best practices and lessons learned platform. The first volume of the publication on best practices and lessons learned¹⁰ contains an initial selection by the LEG and was also displayed on an online platform.¹¹ The LEG intends to publish additional cases through the LDC Portal on a regular basis. The second volume is planned for the second half of 2012 as more LDCs are interviewed and profiled (see paragraphs 51 and 52 below).

2. Best practices and lessons learned publication

51. The LEG agreed to produce a second volume of the best practices and lessons learned publication by the end of 2012. The publication will focus on the implementation aspects of NAPAs and the LDC work programme, touching on the following areas:

- (a) The development of plans for the full implementation of NAPAs;
- (b) The issues of co-financing, setting the baseline of projects and other LDCF related issues;
- (c) The accessing of funds other than the LDCF;
- (d) The relationship with key stakeholders, in particular the GEF and its agencies;
- (e) The considerations for the revision and update of the NAPAs, including expedited approaches to revision and update, best practices and lessons learned, and instigating linkages towards medium- and long-term adaptation;
- (f) The implementation on the ground;
- (g) The synergies with other programmes and projects.

52. To this end, interviews with the LDC NAPA teams will continue during the SBI sessions and at other secretariat meetings to capture relevant experiences and lessons learned. The countries which are to be targeted will be either at an advanced or early stage of implementation. The LEG will also look at countries that have accessed LDCF funding in an expedited manner with little or no bottlenecks. The group will also consider sectoral and geographical approaches.

3. Information to the least developed countries on the work of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group

53. In 2012 and beyond, the LEG intends to send a regular information note to the LDC Parties, as a means of further enhancing communication between the LEG and the LDCs. The note will be disseminated in both English and French and sent out four times a year: after each SBI session and each LEG meeting.

54. The first such information note was sent in February 2012. It provided information on the outcome of COP 17 on matters specific to the LDCs and, on the outcomes of the first year of work under the current mandate of the LEG.

4. Aggregated Least Developed Countries Expert Group publication for 2012

55. The LEG discussed ways to effectively disseminate the results of its work to the Parties, in particular the various working papers that the group produces prior to each of its meetings. In fact, these papers provide useful recommendations and advice to LDCs on

¹⁰ Available at <http://unfccc.int/essential_background/library/items/3599.php?such=j&symbol=FCCC/GEN/263%20E#beg>.

¹¹ Available at <<http://unfccc.int/6491>>.

specific issues related to the preparation or implementation of NAPAs, other elements of the LDC work programme and the NAP process. The LEG decided to package all these papers into one publication for distribution to Parties. The publication, which will be ready for COP 18 will include the following themes:

- (a) Updated guidelines for the revision and update of NAPAs: considerations of sector-specific approaches and multiple timescales for adaptation planning;
- (b) Unravelling the programmatic approach for NAPA implementation: the GEF and other related approaches;
- (c) Analysis of the implementation of NAPA: trends and measures of success and benchmarks for key steps and expected outcomes;
- (d) An approach for monitoring the effectiveness of adaptation efforts in LDCs to reduce vulnerability and adaptation at different scales;
- (e) Building a knowledge base of common vulnerabilities and practical solutions in addressing vulnerability and adaptation at different scales;
- (f) Methods and tools used in the formulation and implementation of NAP in different countries;
- (g) Integrating gender and other considerations regarding vulnerable communities into the design and implementation of activities under the LDC work programme;
- (h) The role and application of technology in addressing vulnerability and adaptation in LDCs through the NAPA and similar plans and programmes;
- (i) Promotion of regional synergy in the implementation of NAPA and other elements of the LDC work programme: a revised LEG paper;
- (j) Progress report on the work of a wide range of organizations and institutions in supporting the implementation of the LDC and the LEG work programmes.

5. Engaging additional regional organizations, centres and networks in the implementation of the least developed countries work programme

56. The LEG discussed the engagement of regional organizations, centres or networks, and such global entities with regional programmes that could add value to the NAP process. The LEG agreed to continue to compile a list of entities to be engaged for this purpose, drawing upon those engaged in the NAPA process, partners to the Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, and any other relevant entities. The LEG emphasized the engagement of entities whose themes and work areas or services could benefit the LDC work programme, the NAPAs and the NAP process. Such themes, work areas or services could include networking, data and information generation and dissemination, modelling and projections, training and capacity-building. The LEG further suggested that since such a multitude of these centres, institutes and organizations exist, the list could be more focused and prioritized based on the potential impact of their activities on LDCs. The LEG also suggested that priority should be given to those organizations working at the local level and providing concrete outputs within LDCs. The LEG noted that many universities within developing countries offer valuable training, and that these could also be potential institutions to consider for the implementation of the LDC work programme.

I. Discussion with the Global Environment Facility and its agencies

1. Proceedings

57. The LEG held discussions with the GEF and its agencies on the first and second days of its meeting. The GEF secretariat, ADB, FAO, UNDP and UNEP participated in the discussions. In addition to focusing on further specifications for the other elements of the LDC work programme, the discussions focused on the latest experiences, challenges and lessons learned in developing NAPA/LDCF projects and accessing the LDCF. UNDP and UNEP were also given an opportunity to present their proposal for a global support programme to assist LDCs in the NAP process.

2. Main issues raised

58. The LEG worked together with the GEF and its agencies to find ways to facilitate the implementation of the remaining elements of the LDC work programme by considering a set of specifications and possible ways forward on each of the elements of the work programme. Both the LEG and the GEF and its agencies were committed to seeing progress on this issue and agreed on a number of specific issues.

59. The interaction also provided an opportunity for in-depth discussions on the latest experiences, challenges and gaps, and emerging areas of support on developing NAPA projects, with a view to informing further work of the LEG in support provided to the LDCs. The GEF highlighted the level of access of the LDCF resources by the LDCs by region. At the low end are the small island developing State LDCs which have received 20.5 per cent of the approved LDCF resources, and on the higher end are African LDCs which have received over 50 per cent of the approved LDCF resources.

60. It was perceived that a number of challenges remained to be overcome, including the following:

- (a) Lack of climate data and assessments to make the case for projects;
- (b) Difficulties in establishing baselines for projects including the differentiation between the baseline for development and the baseline for adaptation, and, the related issue of co-financing;
- (c) Assessing the effectiveness of adaptation measures: with the adaptation discipline at an early stage, in particular when it comes to implementation on the ground, there is, by default, a lack of evidence on the effectiveness of adaptation measures;
- (d) The review process of the GEF used to screen project proposals or project identification forms submitted to the LDCF sometimes went beyond the boundaries of the PIF since some of the comments made by the GEF required very detailed answers, which were better suited to the FPD formulation phase. Moreover, on some occasions, during a follow-up round of review, the GEF would raise new issues and comments that had never been raised before.

61. The LEG, the GEF, and its agencies, looked at several new lessons from the latest experiences with the implementation of the NAPA. Some of these lessons emerged as the above-mentioned challenges were addressed. These include the following:

- (a) It is important to demonstrate clearly the benefit of funding a particular project and the positive impact it will have on reducing vulnerability in order to develop a project rationale. This rationale is stronger if the case is built on vulnerability and adaptation assessment based on existing work such as NAPAs, national communications, technology needs assessments, the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and a multi-criteria analysis;

(b) It is important to develop a strategic results framework at an early stage of the project (i.e. during the project proposal/PIF stage) in order to have a clear idea of the road map for implementation;

(c) Projects need to be developed based on a solid baseline with smart indicators and a comprehensive plan for monitoring and evaluation. Existing literature could be used to argue regarding the cost-effectiveness of the proposed options. In parallel, the international and national communities could pursue work on providing a mechanism to measure the effectiveness of adaptation measures. When it is not possible to have a quantitative assessment of the options, the assessment could at least be qualitative. Results, both good and bad, need to be well documented and archived;

(d) It is worth taking stock of ongoing activities and building on lessons learned at each stage of the implementation;

(e) Projects will benefit from thorough consultations with relevant stakeholders during the development and implementation phases. The interaction with the stakeholders should be documented and they should be asked to validate every important step of the implementation;

(f) Strong interaction between the GEF agencies operating in the country also contribute to improving the project delivery;

(g) It is important to ensure that stakeholders' roles are clarified at an early stage and that all relevant sectors are involved at all stages through a focal point.

62. The discussions also touched upon possible opportunities that could be explored in implementing projects, including the possibility of scaling up the scope and/or the level of funding by developing a programme rather than a project; opportunity to establish a mechanism which guarantees the continuity of the interventions beyond the lifespan of the project in particular through linking the implementation of NAPAs to the NAP process and maintaining institutions; the need to assist some of the LDCs in funding related issues such as the procurement process and management of funds.

63. As an increasing number of LDCs are moving towards the implementation of the second and subsequent projects from their NAPAs, several questions were also identified which included: how NAPA implementation projects could be used to attract the private sector and consequently diversify the sources of funding; whether a country could consider NAPA revision before starting the implementation of a second project; how to manage the implementation of projects when the baseline changes.

3. Proposal for a global support programme for the national adaptation plans process

64. UNDP and UNEP presented their joint proposal for a global support programme for the NAP process to assist countries in formulating and implementing their NAPs. The programme proposed by these two agencies comprises three components, namely: the brokering of knowledge, institutional support and technical support. The question and answer session that followed the presentation gave an opportunity to UNDP and UNEP to provide clarifications on some of the aspects of their joint proposal. They were also able to obtain feedback from the LEG on the support programme, which they agreed to use in subsequent iterations of the proposal.

J. Interaction with other organizations and experts

65. The three organizations invited to the twenty-first meeting of the LEG apart from the GEF and its agencies made a presentation highlighting their areas of work. The

presentation made by a representative of ICIMOD focused on its experiences in adaptation in mountainous ecosystems. It also addressed specific phenomena such as GLOFs and the experiences in designing and carrying out outreach and awareness activities for the communities in those areas. The representative of the RCCP of Southern Africa focused her presentation on the experiences of her organization in supporting Southern African countries with respect to the collection and use of data, information, models and tools for the adaptation planning and implementation. The representative of the Earth Institute at Columbia University in New York presented the adaptation process of New York State in the United States of America. It included the methodology, tools, resources of the project, the best practices and lessons learned from the experience, and a view of the applicability of the New York State approach to LDCs.

66. The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session during which further ideas were generated on possible outputs of the NAP guidelines and on modules for the upcoming LEG regional training workshops.

K. Interaction with the Bhutan national adaptation programme of action team

67. In keeping with its practice of interacting with the NAPA team of the host country, the LEG conducted an interactive session with representatives of the Bhutan NAPA team. The Bhutan NAPA team presented progress made in implementing their NAPA, and shared their experiences, best practices and lessons learned. The interactive session was enhanced by a visit to Bhutan's first NAPA project under the LDCF called Reducing climate change induced risks and vulnerabilities from glacial lake outburst floods in the Punakha-Wangdi and Chamkhar valleys.

68. During the visit, the Bhutan NAPA team made four presentations. The first presentation provided an overview of NAPA preparation and update in Bhutan. The NAPA preparation was undertaken by Bhutan between 2004 and 2006, and it has been updated to take into consideration the emerging climate change risks and costing and ranking of the priorities. The updated NAPA will be submitted to the secretariat.

69. The second presentation gave an overview of the above-mentioned project which is at an advanced stage of implementation and is planned to be completed in 2013. This project has three components. The first component addresses disaster risk management. The second one is about the physical lowering of the water level of the Thorthomi Lake to prevent GLOF. The last component is concerned with the establishment of a sound early warning system at the district and community level to reduce human and material losses in vulnerable communities in the Punakha and Wangdi Valleys. Some of the lessons learned from implementing this project include the advantage of having a strong country ownership of such a system and the importance of having an environmentally friendly approach throughout the life of the project and beyond. Among the challenges faced, it was highlighted that the dependency on the weather and the difficult route conditions make transportation of materials and conduct of the work complex, including for evacuation in case of emergency. The project received a lot of media coverage which contributed to raising awareness of climate change issues in the country (more information on the project is available on the Bhutan national project web page).¹²

70. The third presentation focused on the third component of the GLOF project: the establishment of an early warning system that allows a shift from a manual early warning system to an automatic system. This component involved the expansion of observational

¹² See <www.bhutanglofproject.gov.bt>.

networks and equipment including remote monitoring stations, a control room, several sirens to alert the communities in case of an immediate risk and communication satellites.

71. The last presentation highlighted the key progress in the formulation of a decentralized disaster risk management system that comprises a set of activities based on a multisectoral approach recognizing the clear role of each national executing agency. This last component includes activities such as: comprehensive training of the representatives of the local communities, a programme aimed at making the local school safer, awareness raising initiatives through the media or documentary films, the identification of community disaster focal points and the identification of safe GLOF evacuation areas.

72. During the interaction with the Bhutan NAPA team, the LEG had the opportunity to visit one of the siren stations and the control room installed as part of the project activities. In addition, a visit to one of the local communities was organized and a lively interaction with the community chief took place as he explained how his community was organizing itself to cope with climate change related disasters.

III. Development of the work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group for 2012–2013

73. The LEG reviewed the progress made in implementing its work programme for 2011–2012. It integrated the results of this exercise with the new mandates coming from COP 17. As a result, in addition to the existing activities which are either under implementation or will be implemented in 2012 or 2013, the group identified new activities as part of its work programme for 2012–2013. The LEG prioritized these activities as presented in annex I.

Annex I

[English only]

Two-year rolling work programme of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group for 2012–2013

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Main activities</i>	<i>Product/Output/Activity type</i>
Provide technical guidance and advice for the national adaptation plan (NAP) process	Least developed countries (LDCs) increase their capacities to reduce their vulnerability to climate change, and to integrate adaptation into developmental planning	Develop technical guidelines for the NAP process, arrange a technical review and publish the guidelines Profile LDCs with respect to addressing adaptation through mechanisms under the Convention and other external processes	Technical guidelines for the NAP process by the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 18) Process, compilation
Support implementation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs)	Advice and technical support on the implementation of NAPAs is provided	Compile and analyse support needs for the NAP process, including through surveys to Parties during the subsidiary body sessions Conduct regional training workshops to: Facilitate the application of new approaches such as the programmatic approach and the integration of gender and vulnerable communities' concerns into the implementation of NAPAs; Address key concerns related to the accessing of funds from the LDC Fund; guide revision and update of NAPAs; introduce considerations for medium- and long-term adaptation; Serve as a platform for exchanging best practices and lessons learned at the national and regional levels	Compilation, survey interviews, analyses Regional training workshops in September 2012–September 2013
	Support for monitoring the impact and effectiveness of efforts to address vulnerability is provided	Prepare training materials for the regional training workshops Compile relevant existing work on monitoring and evaluation of adaptation efforts, and develop an approach paper for monitoring the	Training materials by September 2012 Information paper by September 2012

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Expected results</i>	<i>Main activities</i>	<i>Product/Output/Activity type</i>
		effectiveness of efforts to address vulnerability in LDCs	
Support implementation of the LDC work programme	Implementation of the LDC work programme is facilitated	Prepare a specification on each of the elements of the LDC work programme other than NAPAs, in consultation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with a view to informing the COP on the guidance to be provided to the GEF	Information through the report on the 21 st meeting of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) by March 2012
Support preparation, revision and update of NAPAs	LDCs are assisted in the preparation, revision and update revision of their NAPAs	Communicate best practices and lessons learned from the LDCs that have revised their NAPAs, including expedited ways to do so	Outreach
Support implementation of cross-cutting activities and outreach on the work of the LEG	Cross-cutting activities and outputs from the work of the LEG are widely and effectively captured and disseminated to LDCs and others	Enhance the LDC Portal to serve as the main knowledge base for information on the work of the LEG Prepare a publication on best practices and lessons learned in addressing adaptation in LDCs, volume 2 Conduct in-depth country case studies on LDCs to discern the best practices and lessons learned in areas of the work of the LEG Compile and disseminate, through a publication, case studies to identify experiences with methods and tools in components/steps of the NAPA/NAP and other adaptation processes Prepare an aggregated publication for outputs of the LEG in 2012	Information sharing platform Outreach product, by December 2012 Process Outreach product by September 2012 Outreach product by March 2013
Support coherence and synergy of adaptation related efforts under the Convention	Work of the LEG is enhanced through cooperation with other bodies under the Convention, and feeds into the work of the Adaptation Committee and others	Identify national and regional centres and institutions that offer services at the local levels in LDCs such as training and capacity-building, taking into account existing linkages with other local institutions Update/revise the LEG technical paper on regional synergy as part of the technical guidelines for the NAP process	Process Information paper by August 2012

Annex II

[English only]

Members of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group as at 13 April 2012

Mr. Abias Huongo	Angola
Mr. Erwin Künzi	Austria
Mr. Ibila Djibril	Benin
Mr. Thinley Namgyel	Bhutan
Ms. Beth Lavender	Canada
Mr. Mphethe Tongwane	Lesotho
Mr. Bennon Bibbu Yassin	Malawi
Mr. Batu Krishna Uprety	Nepal
Mr. Jan Verhagen	Netherlands
Mr. Douglas Yee	Solomon Islands
Mr. Paul Abiziou Tchinguilou	Togo
Ms. Pepetua Election Latasi	Tuvalu
Mr. Fredrick Manyika	United Republic of Tanzania
